



SENATOR *36th District* Jeanne Kohl-Welles

A Citizen's Guide to the

2002 Legislature



Dear Constituents,

With the holidays over and the new year just begun, I hope you feel renewed and hopeful for the year ahead.

This past year was a sobering one for all of us. The tragic events of Sept. 11 dealt a terrible blow in a year already marred by an earthquake, drought, energy crisis, forest fires, the move of Boeing's headquarters to Chicago and

subsequent layoff announcements, and extremely difficult negotiations in the Legislature. Because of these factors, most of us who serve in your state capitol were sure that 2001 was the worst session possible. But with a projected \$1.25-billion shortfall in our state budget and a recession hitting us perhaps the hardest of any state, this year's Legislative session promises to be even tougher.

This is a short session — just 60 days — and there is a lot to accomplish.

Balancing our state budget is at the top of the to-do list. In a short session, we usually make only minor changes to the state's two-year spending plan. But this year is a marked exception.

Our economic outlook has changed dramatically since we approved the budget last year. We are now in a recession and voter approval of Initiative 747 has significantly reduced our ability to generate revenue. Demands for social and health services are expected to increase as the economy slows and more people join the ranks of the unemployed. And we must deal with the rising costs of health care, public schools, colleges and prisons. Rather than refine the 2001-2003 budget, we will be writing it anew.

As we do this, my highest priority will be to protect essential services and programs for our most vulnerable citizens. I also will be working to keep higher education accessible and affordable while maintaining quality; strengthen background-check statutes to ensure the protection and well-being of children and vulnerable adults in state-operated and/or -licensed facilities; allow desperate and unprepared young parents to leave newborn infants at a hospital without fear of prosecution; clarify regulated medical use of medicinal marijuana; allow a limited number of qualified welfare recipients to count post-secondary education as their work requirement; achieve agreement on transportation funding; and enact meaningful legislation to reform our drug sentencing policies.

The tie in the House of Representatives was finally broken by the November elections. While this will help ease some of the gridlock we struggled with for the past three years, I believe we must work in a bipartisan spirit. Now is the time to stand together as we work to rebuild our economy, promote good jobs and assist vulnerable citizens. And you can play a vital role. I've included information in this newsletter about the Legislature and how you can get involved in our state government. I hope you find it useful.

It's an honor to be your senator and I look forward to working with you during the 2002 legislative session. Remember: Your input and involvement help the Legislature do its best on behalf of the citizens of Washington.

Sincerely,

Jeanne
Jeanne Kohl-Welles

Ways to get involved in our state government

Get to know your legislators—

I encourage you to call me or my legislative assistant Ruth Bowman in Olympia or my district office. You can also e-mail me and/or subscribe to my E-Newsletter.

Write letters—

I answer all letters I receive from people who have a concern and/or want to get involved. You may want to include a copy of any correspondence you send to the governor, state officials or other legislators so that I can more effectively follow up on your ideas and concerns.

Call the toll-free hot line—

Throughout the session, you can call the toll-free hot line at (800)562-6000 to leave a message for me, another legislator or the governor. The hot line for the hearing impaired is (800)635-9993.

Invite legislators to meetings—

I always welcome the opportunity to meet with individuals, groups and local organizations about problems or concerns. Call my office if you'd like to arrange a meeting.

Getting our budget back on track

As you know, our state is grappling with a \$1.25-billion budget shortfall. How, you may wonder, did we get into such a bind?

We began the 2001-2003 budget cycle with two voter-approved education initiatives that claimed nearly \$1 billion of the state's general fund. These came at a time when we were still adjusting to the impacts of I-695, the car-tab measure, which through legislative action eliminated a major source of revenue from our budget.

The downturn in our economy sharpened after the Sept. 11 attacks. At Boeing alone, an estimated 30,000 people stand to lose their jobs. With voter approval of I-747, state revenues dropped even further. And the cost of health care, prisons and other social services continues to rise. In short, we simply don't have enough funds to meet all of our state's growing needs. We will have to set priorities carefully.

As a member of the Senate Ways & Means Committee, I will be working hard to get our budget back into balance. While cuts in programs and services are unavoidable, I am determined to help ensure adequate funding for education and to maintain the safety net for the people in our state who need help the most – children, the elderly, the disabled and the poor.

The challenges ahead are daunting, but not insurmountable. Please contact me with your thoughts and concerns about this difficult budget situation. Together, we can rebuild our economy, protect the most vulnerable among us, and ensure a safe and secure future for us all.

TVW

One great way to stay informed of legislative business is by tuning in to TVW, Washington's state-level, public affairs channel. Depending on your cable company, you can watch TVW on the following channels in the Seattle area:

AT&T Broadband – Channel 23

Millennium Digital Cable – Channel 74

Husky TV – Channel 68

If you need help finding TVW on your dial, visit TVW's Web site at www.tvw.org on the Internet, or call them at (360)586-5555.

Senate and House Higher Education committees tour state

While the Legislature was out of session last summer and fall, the Senate and House Higher Education committees held ten public hearings throughout the state to discuss education funding, tuition and financial aid. Administrators, professors, instructors and students all testified about their concerns related to funding needs and funding approaches in higher education, including tuition and financial aid.

We also addressed the status of Washington State University and University of Washington branch campuses. A common goal among all participants has been to keep higher education in our state accessible and affordable while maintaining a variety of high-quality offerings.

This month, the Senate Higher Education Committee is holding a hearing to discuss the future of higher education in our state given increasing enrollment demands in a time of shrinking resources.



Last fall, the Senate and House Higher Education committees held several hearings throughout the state to discuss education funding, tuition and financial aid. I co-chaired the joint hearings and am pictured here listening to students, faculty and administrators at Cascadia Community College in Bothell.

Access at your fingertips



You can keep up on legislative business via the Internet. The Legislature's home page is www.leg.wa.gov, which has links to the House and Senate home pages, bill information and even a special section for kids. For budget information, check out links to the Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees. And you can visit my home page at www.leg.wa.gov/senate/members/senmem36.htm.

PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH!



Your comments and concerns are always appreciated. Please take a moment to tell me what's on your mind. Cut out and place in an envelope and mail to my office: PO Box 40436, Olympia, WA 98504-0436

Dear Jeanne,

Name, address, phone number and e-mail (optional)

Yes! I want to subscribe to your E-Newsletter, which provides updates during the legislative session.

My e-mail address is:



Share your views: testify before the state Legislature

Your voice is important! One of the most effective ways you can contribute to the legislative process is to testify at a bill hearing. Whether in support or opposition, your opinions matter and are of real value to legislators.

Washington has one of the most open legislatures in the country. A bill receives a public hearing before Senate and House committees as part of the legislative process. Your opportunity to express your opinion, or "testify," is at committee hearings. Senate committees usually meet in hearing rooms in the John A. Cherberg Building, and House committees meet in the John L. O'Brien Building, both on the Capitol Campus in Olympia.

You can find out when and where a bill will be heard by:

- ♦ Calling the toll-free legislative hot line: **(800)562-6000**.

- ♦ Subscribing to the Legislative Meeting Schedule (\$10 charge per calendar year). Send a check made out to the Washington State Treasurer to:
Senate Word Processing
319 Cherberg Building
PO Box 40482
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

- ♦ Accessing the Legislature's home page at www.leg.wa.gov on the Internet.

Here are some suggestions to make testifying as easy and effective as possible:

- ♦ Be punctual, because usually only one public hearing for testimony is held on a particular bill.
- ♦ Sign in on the sheet at the table near the hearing room entrance.
- ♦ Introduce yourself to the chair and committee members and state your purpose. There is no need to be nervous, as committee members will appreciate that you've made the effort to share your views.
- ♦ Organize your comments and avoid duplicating what others have already said. Time is usually limited, often to only three minutes, so be as brief and as clear as you can. Summarize your testimony, rather than read it, when you address the committee.

If you are unable to appear before a committee in person, you may write a letter or send an e-mail, making your position on a bill known.

Glossary of legislative terms

Amendment – Any change in a bill, resolution or memorial.

At ease – A pause in the proceedings of the Senate or the House.

Biennial Budget – Two-year spending plan for the state, adopted in odd-numbered years.

Bill – A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.

Caucus – A group or meeting of legislators belonging to the same political party to discuss policy and budget issues.

Hearing – A legislative committee meeting at which individuals present testimony on matters under consideration by the committee.

House of Representatives – Lower chamber of our two-body Legislature.

Interim – Time between legislative sessions.

Legislature – The body made up of the members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Page – A high school student who assists the House or Senate.

Quorum – A majority of members of a group.

RCW – Revised Code of Washington. This is a codification of current state statutes (laws) as enacted and amended.

Roll Call – Record of how senators or representatives vote on a particular issue.

Senate – Upper chamber of a two-body legislature.

Session – Official meeting of the Legislature. The constitution provides for one 105-day regular session during odd-numbered years and one 60-day session during even-numbered years.

Statute – A law enacted by the Legislature.

Supplemental Budget – Changes in the second year of the biennium to funds allocated in the original capital, operating and transportation budgets.

Veto – Rejection of a legislative bill by the governor. The governor also has the authority to exercise a “partial veto.” This is the rejection of one or more sections of a bill, but not the entire legislation.

WAC – Washington Administrative Code. Explains how state agencies shall organize and adopt rules and regulations. “WACs and Rules & Regs” refer to agency guidelines adopted pursuant to the Administrative Code.

Q: How many members of the Legislature are there?

A: There are 49 members of the Senate and 98 members of the House of Representatives, with one senator and two representatives from each of the state's 49 legislative districts. Presently, the 36th District has about 108,000 residents. This number will increase to about 120,000 after redistricting is completed. Redistricting occurs every 10 years after the national census is taken, to ensure that all legislative and congressional districts represent roughly the same number of people. New districts will go into effect in 2003.

About the “short” session

A 60-day session, like the one we have just begun, is held every even-numbered year. The main task of the Legislature during a “short” session is to write the state's supplemental budget. Just as your family's finances might change over time, which consequently changes your spending habits, the state's budget works largely the same way. It's important to remember that the state's budget is based on future estimates of expected revenues, not actual money in the bank. So when the state's economic forecast changes, funds available for use also change.

This year the state's revenues are lower than expected. This means difficult decisions are ahead as we seek ways to reduce spending and/or find new sources of revenue. During these 60 days, the Legislature will adapt the budget to these changes and introduce new legislation. During the 105-day session, held in odd-numbered years, the Legislature enacts the state's two-year or “biennial” budget.

Q: When does the session begin and end?

A: The legislative session begins Monday, Jan. 14 and ends Thursday, March 14. We could go into a special session, called by the governor for 30-day periods, if we are not able to pass the supplemental budget by the end of the regular session.

Q: How can I get a copy of a bill?

A: There are several ways — You can pick one up in person from the Legislative Information Center, located in the Legislative Building in Olympia. Or you can call the Legislative Information Center at (360)786-7573, and the bill can be mailed or faxed (with some page restrictions). The fax number is (360)786-1293.

You can also download a bill from the Legislature's home page at www.leg.wa.gov on the Internet.

Contacting other government officials

You may want to express your interest in an issue or ask a question of one of the statewide elected officials. Here's how to contact them:

Governor Gary Locke
Box 40002 Olympia, WA 98504-0002
(360)902-4111e-mail: governor.locke@gov.wa.gov

Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen
Box 40482 Olympia, WA 98504-0482
(360)786-7700e-mail: owen_br@leg.wa.gov

Secretary of State Sam Reed
Box 40220 Olympia, WA 98504-0220
(360)902-4151e-mail: mail@secstate.wa.gov

Treasurer Michael J. Murphy
Box 40200 Olympia, WA 98504-0200
(360)753-7130e-mail: watreas@tre.wa.gov

Auditor Brian Sonntag
Box 40021 Olympia, WA 98504-0021
(360)902-0370e-mail: sonntagb@sao.wa.gov

Attorney General Christine Gregoire
Box 40100 Olympia, WA 98504-0100
(360)753-6200e-mail: emailago@atg.wa.gov

Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson
Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200
(360)586-6904e-mail: feedback@ospi.wednet.edu

Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland
Box 47001 Olympia, WA 98504-7001
(360)902-1000

Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler
Box 40255 Olympia, WA 98504-0255
(360)753-7300e-mail: kacyb@oic.wa.gov

More questions about state government? Call the toll-free Washington State Information Line at (800)321-2808 or visit Access Washington at www.access.wa.gov on the Internet.

*You are Invited!***36th Legislative District Day -
Monday, Feb. 18 (Presidents' Day)**

Please join me, along with state Reps. Mary Lou Dickerson and Helen Sommers, on Monday, Feb. 18, for the 36th Legislative District Day in Olympia. We will be setting aside part of the day to meet in Olympia with constituents from the district. It's an excellent way to get to know your legislators and learn about state government. Here's the tentative schedule:

10:30 a.m. — Meet in the Legislative Building rotunda to kick off the day, receive a legislative schedule and tour the capitol.

12:00-1:00 p.m. — Brown bag lunch in the Cherberg Building's Senate Hearing Room 1. This is your time to ask us questions about legislative issues of interest to you.

The rest of the day is yours. Depending on the Legislature's schedule, you might want to sit in on a committee hearing or up in the galleries to watch Senate or House floor proceedings. **And if you want to come early, the Senate Higher Education Committee, which I chair, is set to meet at 10 a.m. in the John A. Cherberg Building.**

For further details, please call my legislative assistant Ruth Bowman at (360)786-7670. For carpool/transportation information, call Thomas Whittemore at (206)783-7932.

*Calling all high school students!***Youth Advisory Council meeting –
Saturday, Jan. 26**

Calling all high school students! Are you interested in becoming more involved in your state government? Come talk with your legislators — state Reps. Mary Lou Dickerson and Helen Sommers and me, your state senator — at our annual Youth Advisory Council meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26 at the Ballard Family Center, 5449 Ballard Ave. N.W., in Ballard. We'll discuss the upcoming legislative session and ask for your input and ideas so that we can better represent young people in our district.

For more information, please call my legislative assistant Ruth Bowman at (360)786-7670 or send her an e-mail at bowman_ru@leg.wa.gov. You can also contact Rep. Dickerson's assistant, Mike O'Sullivan, at (360)786-7860 or via e-mail at osulliva_mi@leg.wa.gov.

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles 36th Legislative District

432 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40436
Olympia, WA 98504-0436



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Stay in touch!

Please keep me informed of your ideas, concerns and community activities.

Olympia Office

432 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40436 Olympia, WA 98504-0436
Phone: 360-786-7670
Fax: 360-786-7450
E-mail: kohl_je@leg.wa.gov

Web site:

www.leg.wa.gov/senate/members/senmem36.htm

Senate Committees:

Higher Education, chair
Ways & Means
Human Services & Corrections
Education

New district office

This month I'll be moving my district office to the old Seattle City Light Building at 157 Roy St., Seattle, 98109. My office will continue to be part of the City of Seattle's Uptown Community Center, which also includes the Queen Anne-Magnolia Neighborhood Service Center, the Uptown Alliance and Easter Seals. As we are still in the process of situating offices and hooking up phone lines, phone and fax numbers are not yet available. I will post this information on my Web page as soon as it is available, or you can call my Olympia office to get an update.



Take a tour

I hope you can make it to the 36th Legislative District Day on Feb. 18, but the state capitol is a wonderful place to visit any time, particularly during the legislative session. Plan to come to Olympia for the day and take a tour of the historic Legislative Building and the rest of the Capitol Campus, such as the Supreme Court, the arboretum, and the WW II, Korean and Vietnam war memorials. Sit in on a committee hearing, or watch Senate or House proceedings from the galleries.

I enjoy meeting with constituents when they come to Olympia, particularly school and senior groups. Please call my office or State Capitol Tours at (360)586-8687 when you're planning a visit, if you'd like help with your arrangements.



Visitors tour the Vietnam War Memorial on the Capitol Campus in Olympia.